

Before-reading questions

- 1 *Reader's own answer.*
- 2 *Reader's own answer.*

During-reading questions**CHAPTER ONE**

- 1 Ellen has had an unhappy marriage to Count Olenski. Now she has left her husband and returned to New York.
- 2 Archer asks May to announce their engagement earlier than they planned. He wants to show New York society that he approves of May's family's behavior.

CHAPTER TWO

- 1 Mrs. Rushworth was Archer's lover for a while before he met May. He was in love with her but she ended it. His mother, Mrs. Archer, is relieved because her son is going to marry a nice, innocent young woman.
- 2 Mr. and Mrs. Lovell Mingott invite their friends to dinner to meet Ellen Olenska but almost everyone says no. Mrs. Archer asks her very important friends Mr. and Mrs. van der Luyden to have a dinner with Ellen to show that they approve of her.

CHAPTER THREE

- 1 Archer thinks that he has not had enough time to tell her because they have been busy visiting friends and family all day. He might also be embarrassed to tell May because he is becoming interested in Ellen.
- 2 Archer thinks that New York high society is like a large, powerful machine, which one woman cannot fight against.
- 3 Archer means that the van der Luydens' dinner was an example of New York high society showing that it is all right for them to be with Ellen.

CHAPTER FOUR

- 1 **Example answer:** Count Olenski may be saying that he will tell everyone about her lover if she tries to divorce him.
- 2 Archer's advice to Ellen is not to divorce, because private things about her will become public and there will be unpleasant talk.

CHAPTER FIVE

- 1 Archer is jealous of Beaufort. Archer knows that Ellen was running away from Beaufort, but he does not know why. It is possible that Ellen is in love with Beaufort and needs to get away from him.
- 2 Archer is shocked because "nice" women do not talk about men's lovers and it is a difficult thing for May to talk about. He is also surprised that she is being so kind to him. If he loves someone else, she would prefer him to give her up than to make someone else unhappy.

CHAPTER SIX

- 1 Mrs. Medora Manson, Ellen's aunt (the woman who Ellen lived with when she was a child), is staying with Ellen.
- 2 Ellen had a more interesting life in Europe, full of art, music, and good conversation. Mrs. Manson also thinks that Ellen should be with her husband.

CHAPTER SEVEN

- 1 Archer is hoping that Ellen will come in after her aunt Mrs. Manson.
- 2 Archer finds Ellen on a pier at the bottom of the garden, looking out to sea.

CHAPTER EIGHT

- 1 Archer goes to Boston to see Ellen.
- 2 Ellen has met her husband's secretary, the man who helped her to run away from her husband.
- 3 Archer is married to May, but he is still in love with Ellen.

CHAPTER NINE

- 1 Mrs. Mingott has had a stroke, maybe because she was so shocked by the news of the Beauforts' problems.
- 2 Archer gets out because he feels very unhappy. He wants to continue his dream of loving Ellen, but she has told him that it is not possible.

CHAPTER TEN

- 1 Archer wants to get some air to make it easier to breathe. He also wants to get away from a difficult conversation with May. She wants him to close the window because it is very cold and she thinks that the cold air will make him ill.
- 2 Ellen is going to live with her grandmother, Mrs. Mingott, to look after her.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

- 1 Archer is planning to leave May, go to Paris to find Ellen, and then travel somewhere with her.
- 2 May tells Archer that she is expecting a baby.

CHAPTER TWELVE

- 1 Archer wants to have some time alone with his son Dallas before Dallas gets married, but he is also afraid of doing new things.
- 2 Dallas has known about Ellen since the day before his mother, May, died. She told him about Archer giving up Ellen for her and their family.
- 3 **Example answer:** Maybe Archer prefers to keep the picture of Ellen as he knew her many years ago. His real life was with May and their children, and he gave up Ellen a long time ago. Maybe he is also afraid of loving her now that it is possible.

After-reading questions

- 1 **Example answer:** The title of the book shows that it is about a time in the past (an “age”) when things were different from the present (when the book is being written). It is a time of “innocence” because the characters keep away from unpleasant things or do not talk about them. But often they understand much more than they choose to say.
- 2 *Reader's own answer.*
- 3 **Example answer:** In Chapter One, Archer is embarrassed by Ellen Olenska. He finds her strange and foreign. When he knows her better, he finds her more interesting than the people around him in New York high society. He admires her and thinks that her life is exciting. He falls in love with her, but he knows that the woman that he loves cannot hurt May — her cousin and his wife.
- 4 **Example answer:** Mrs. Mingott likes to be different. She lives a long way up Manhattan, in a different part of New York to her family and most of New York high society. Her house in Newport is also in an unusual place. Mrs. Welland does not like to be different. She wants May and Archer to have a long engagement because that is what most people do. The characters that like to be different, like Mrs. Mingott, are Ellen, Beaufort, and the English Duke of St. Austrey. The characters that do not like to be different, like Mrs. Welland, are Mr. Jackson, Mrs. Archer, Janey, Mr. and Mrs. van der Luyden, Mr. and Mrs. Lovell Mingott, and Mr. Letterblair. Archer sometimes likes to be different, but not always.

Exercises

CHAPTERS ONE AND TWO

- 1 Archer arrives at the opera at the **perfect** moment.
- 2 Ellen is wearing a very **unusual** dark blue dress at the opera.
- 3 Mrs. Mingott hopes that her house will be **livelier** with Ellen there.
- 4 Mrs. Archer is **impatient** to learn about Ellen, her son's future cousin.
- 5 Archer does not know why Ellen should feel **ashamed** about marrying a terrible man.
- 6 The van der Luydens are one of the most **powerful** families in New York.

CHAPTER THREE

- 2 1 Ellen's house had plants **stretching** across the walls.
- 2 The day **was filled** with more visits to friends and family.
- 3 Sometimes, Archer felt that he **was shown** to people like a wild animal.
- 4 The door **was opened** by a dark-haired girl.
- 5 He could see Julius Beaufort **helping** Countess Olenska out of his carriage.
- 6 "Being here is like **being taken** on holiday when you've been good."

CHAPTER FOUR

- 3 1 Archer works as a lawyer for **Mr. Letterblair**.
- 2 **Count Olenski** will not give any more money to his wife.
- 3 **Nastasia** is from Italy and works for Countess Olenska in New York.
- 4 **Julius Beaufort** is having a party with music on Sunday.
- 5 Count Olenski's secretary saved **Ellen Olenska** from her husband.
- 6 **May** writes to Archer from Florida.

CHAPTER FIVE

- 4 1 When **did Archer arrive at Skuytercliff?**
- 2 Who **appeared on the path in front of Archer and Ellen?**
- 3 Why **won't Beaufort need to travel to speak to Ellen in the future?**
- 4 Where **did Archer go after he got Ellen's message?**
- 5 How long **did May's mother/Mrs. Welland want Archer to stay in Florida?**

CHAPTERS SIX AND SEVEN

- 5 1 Archer was thinking about her last message, **which** he never replied to.
- 2 "I'm not a young girl **who/that** is engaged to be married."
- 3 "But it was you **who/that** made it impossible!"
- 4 "Sometimes, we have to give up things **that/which** we want for the people **who/that** love us."
- 5 "I kept thinking of all the terrible things **that/which** might happen."
- 6 It was now a past dream, **which** had no part at all in his real life.

CHAPTER EIGHT

- 6 1 Mr. Letterblair wanted Archer in Boston **on** business.
- 2 At 9:30 A.M., Archer was walking **down** the hot, crowded streets.
- 3 Archer sat down **by** her side.
- 4 "My husband wants me to go **back** to him."
- 5 Archer remembered the stories about her running **away** with the secretary.
- 6 "Things may appear boring on the **outside**, but **inside** there is something very important."

CHAPTER NINE

- 7 1 Mrs. Archer 2 May
3 Mr. Jackson 4 Archer
5 May 6 Ellen

CHAPTER TEN

- 8 1 “I’m already dead inside. I’ve **been** dead for months and months.”
2 Archer’s heart **was beating** wildly as he stood at Mrs. Mingott’s door.
3 “**Did** you **admire** Ellen when you **brought** her in the carriage?”
4 “I’ve/**have** always **been** sorry that she **didn’t/did not marry** you.”

CHAPTER ELEVEN

- 9 a 5 b 6 c 1 d 4 e 3 f 2

CHAPTER TWELVE

- 10 1 Archer has three children.
2 Archer’s marriage to May was not unhappy/ was happy.
3 Dallas is engaged to Julius Beaufort’s daughter, Fanny.
4 Archer is afraid of traveling to Europe.
5 May told Dallas that Archer was once in love with Ellen.

Project work

Reader’s own answers.